

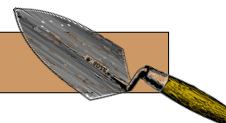


Appleby Archaeology Newsletter



Volume 18 Issue 1

Spring 2015



Group News

This issue of the Newsletter marks an important step for the Group as it carries the first details of our plans to focus our future practical work on the town of Appleby itself. Martin Railton is the driving force behind the project and he writes below to give you an outline of what is proposed. I think you may be surprised by the scale and ambition of his plans, which are likely to occupy us for the next five years. I hope you will be fired with enthusiasm to get involved. The Committee feels that this creates a tremendous opportunity for the Group to make significant contributions both to our archaeological understanding of the area and to the community in which we live.

Elsewhere, your committee has been busy planning next year's lecture series. We hope you've enjoyed the "watery" theme of our current programme - the Hartlepool naval museum visit, the talk on Cumbria's ports and the amazing tale of the Carlisle Ship Canal. I'll just mention that we have one more watery talk still to come, namely April's lecture on the Roman Navy.

Then it's into our Summer walks which start in May with a visit to Musgrave Church Field, where Mike Leigh will remind us of the fieldwork he described at January's AGM. For June we've organised a Saturday trip to Roman Binchester. See back page for details.

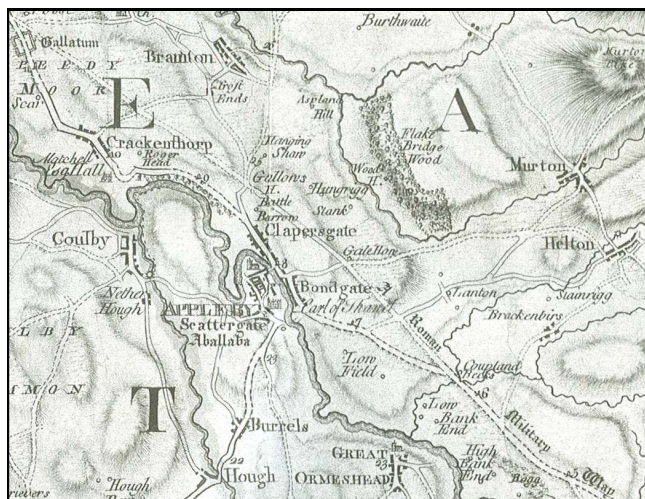
Martin Joyce

Appleby Archaeology's New Research Project

This year will see the launch of Appleby Archaeology Group's new research project which focuses on the town of Appleby-in-Westmorland. The aim of the project is to use archaeology to provide further information on the possible origins and development of the town, which is currently not well-understood. This is largely because there has been very little previous archaeological research undertaken within Appleby-in-Westmorland, due to the lack of modern development within the historic core of the town. However, the limited investigation that has taken place suggests that archaeological remains survive

both within the historic core of the town and in the surrounding landscape.

The archaeological project will provide an opportunity to identify and record the presence of archaeological remains relating to the early history of the former county town, and help document the development of the town in the medieval and post-medieval periods. This will be achieved through a programme of documentary research, survey and archaeological investigation, undertaken primarily by members of the Appleby Archaeology Group and other interested volunteers as a series of mini-projects.



Jeffrey's 1770 Map of Appleby

The research will be developed using specific themes, focused on different periods of the town's history including the medieval planned town, the possible early settlement at Bongate, and the archaeological evidence for Roman activity. We are planning to hold the first research events during the Festival of Archaeology, organised by the Council for British Archaeology between 11th and 16th July 2015.

A launch evening will be held before this to inform members of the project. If you have any particular research interests or wish to participate please contact me at m.railton@cadrus.co.uk.

Martin Railton



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January 2015 : AGM and Member's Evening

On a snowy night in January, members listened to a brief roundup of the preceding year, concluded the business of the AGM and then settled back to enjoy three short but very interesting talks given by the Group's own members.

The first subject of the evening was the site of Musgrave Church Field, which was presented as a double-act by Dr Mike Lea and Martin Railton.

Musgrave Church Field lies to the west of St Theobald's Church on the north bank of the River Eden south of the village of Great Musgrave. First, Dr Mike Lea explained the historical background to the site, and explained some of the projects undertaken by the Musgrave Church Field Trust.



Artist's impression of Musgrave Church Field and associated features

A church has been present at the site since the 13th century. Its position may have been chosen because of its proximity to an early river crossing. However, the site was prone to flooding and in 1845 the church was re-built on higher ground. This followed the 'great flood' of 1822, when the church and associated rectory stood 3 or 4 feet in water and most of the bridges on the River Eden were destroyed. The rectory stood at the east end of Musgrave Church Field until it was demolished in 1884. However this was known to be an 18th century replacement of an even earlier building, the location of which is unknown.

Dr Lea explained how the development of this building, and the associated barn, byre, stable and other buildings can be followed in many archive documents such as Glebe Terriers, Probate Inventories and Tithe records. In 2005 Musgrave Church Field was purchased by the Trust for community use and has received funding under the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme. As a result, archaeological surveys were also commissioned to help inform the management of the site. The Tithe Barn was also restored in

2013 and is now used as an educational facility.

Martin Railton then described how, in 2007, the field and its associated buildings had been the subject of a detailed archaeological survey.

First, the earthwork remains of St Theobald's Rectory were recorded in plan and profile. The remains of at least two buildings were identified as well as the earthen banks of the former rectory orchard and gardens. These were considered likely to be 18th century in date and were situated on the north side of an earthen dyke. This had evidently been constructed on the north side of the River Eden as an early flood defence.

Subsequently, in 2014, further surveys were undertaken at the site by Trust volunteers. These included an earth resistance survey which, it was hoped, would provide evidence for the buried stone walls of the 18th century rectory and might possibly also provide reveal traces of the earlier building.

Large spreads of rubble were detected beneath the turf which almost certainly corresponds to the remains of the 18th century building. The banks and ditches of the former gardens were also surveyed. A magnetic survey of the field was also undertaken and this recorded a number of sub-surface features including enclosure ditches, drains, a former track way and possible rubbish pits or tree throws. It was suggested that following this an archaeological excavation could help confirm the location of the earliest building at the site.



Members of The Musgrave Field Survey team : 2014

The speakers helped demonstrate the value of combining archaeological fieldwork and documentary research in order to investigate the history of a site, an approach which it is hoped will be replicated as part of the Group's research in the Appleby area this summer.

The final presentation was given by Trish Shaw who brought members up to date on the 2014 season's discoveries at the Cistercian Abbey of Holme Cultram. This site has been the subject of a continuing investigation by the West Cumbria Archaeological Society.

Trish explained that the target of the investigation in 2014 had been the monks' refectory and kitchen, the object being to obtain knowledge about their diet. Using a number of slides, she showed the large open area excavation which had revealed the kitchen, complete with a large hearth, together with various drains and sluices from many different building phases of the Abbey. The key find had been a large arched cistern, the purpose of which had been to store water to flush the main drain into the tidal River Waver. Preserved wood had been recovered and would eventually be dated using radiocarbon techniques as there were not enough tree rings for dendrochronology to be used. Other medieval finds included well preserved leather, a ploughshare and a chess piece.



Richard Stevens gets down to details at Home Cultram

In closing, Trish said that around 5 tonnes of organic remains had been sampled and were currently being processed in order to determine the main constituents of the monks' diet.

Further details and many photographs can be found via the Solway Wetlands Landscape Partnership Scheme website.

Richard Stevens

The Carlisle Ship Canal

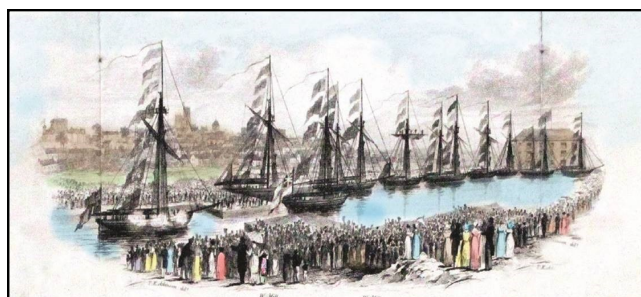
When I (Martin Joyce) was growing up in Carlisle back in the 50s and 60s, the city was always a bit of a mystery to me. It had obviously once been a very busy place, but it was already in serious decline and it wasn't at all clear how or why it had ever become industrialised in the first place. I went to school in Shaddongate (always a pretty rough area) and often walked along Port Road past its mysterious crumbling structures on my way home from playing football on Willowholme. I never had the faintest

idea what they were. And as far I was aware, nobody else did either!

So it was a particular personal pleasure for me to hear our February speaker, David Ramshaw, talk about the Carlisle Ship Canal.

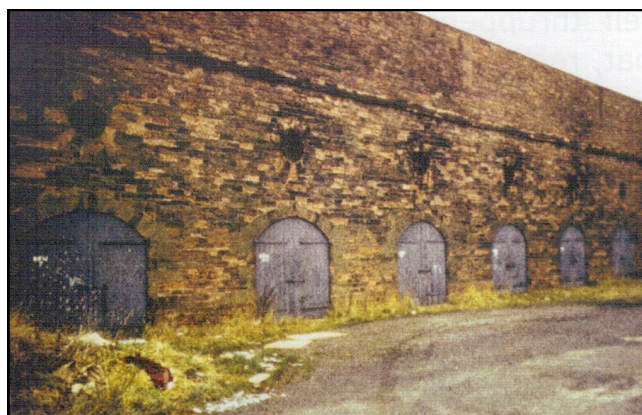
Construction of Carlisle's canal started relatively late in the day, but when it eventually opened in 1823 it had a remarkable effect on the future of the city.

The canal ran for 11½ miles from its mouth at Port Carlisle (formerly Fishers' Cross) to a city basin near the Carr's (presently McVitie's) Biscuit factory. Its opening was an appropriately grand event. Newspaper reports estimated that around 20,000 people came out to watch a flotilla of 11 ships, bedecked with flags and wreathed with the smoke of cannon-fire, make a majestic progress along the canal and into the city. For many of these observers, the sight of masted sailing-ships floating virtually beneath the city walls must have been a near-traumatic event.



Opening Day at the Carlisle Ship Canal. Note the cathedral and castle in the background

For the important thing to note is that this was a **Ship** canal, as in "Manchester Ship canal" (albeit on a rather more modest scale). Though relatively small, the ships in the procession were ocean-going vessels, not mere barges, and ships from Carlisle were capable of trading into the Baltic and even across the Atlantic. They were hauled along the canal by horses.



Mysterious crumbling structures in Port Road - actually coal-hoppers to facilitate the unloading of ships moored in the basin above. Demolished in 1987.

Although the canal itself never made much money, it would appear that it was the stimulus that turned sleepy, agricultural Carlisle into the vibrant, industrial City it subsequently became. The years that immediately followed its opening saw the growth of Carr's biscuits empire, the construction of Dixon's Shaddon Mill (in its day, the largest cotton mill in England) and the start of Messrs Cowan Sheldon's production of heavy engineering goods. An unlikely ship-building concern even developed in the City basin.

The canal had an effect on the social structure of the city too. The arrival of large numbers of "navvies" turned the Shaddongate area of the city into something akin to the Wild West. Perhaps it was a reaction to this that led Carlisle to establish its first police force in 1827. The opening of the Cumberland Infirmary shortly thereafter may be pure coincidence, but it demonstrates a growing confidence and ambition on the part of the city fathers.

By 1853, however, the canal was redundant. New technology in the form of the steam locomotive had simply overtaken it - while the journey to Port Carlisle by canal took around 3 hours, a train would cover the same distance in 30 minutes! The Board of Directors had little hesitation in determining to cut their losses by the simple expedient of draining the canal and laying a track on the bed. Sadly for them, another railway, this time to Silloth with its substantially larger docks, killed their business shortly thereafter.

Few relics of the canal now remain. The curious may wonder how the "Jovial Sailor" pub came to stand in "Port Road" in Shaddongate. The old docks at Port Carlisle are still visible and may one day be suitable for restoration as a marina. A few strangely-featured bridges and buildings may still be observed in the fields between these two locations. But there is little now to show for such an enormous expenditure of effort. Nevertheless the canal may be said to have left its mark in a much more substantial way - namely the modern city of Carlisle.



The "Jovial Sailor", Port Road, Carlisle. The building to the left was the canal basin's Gatehouse.

David Ramshaw's book on the Carlisle Ship Canal is available from P3 Publications, priced at £13.

Martin Joyce

Spring Lectures

The Roman Navy and the Classis Britannica

Tuesday 14th Apr

Speaker : David Mason , Principal Archaeologist for Durham County Council

Lectures take place at 7.30pm in the upper room of Centre 67 in Chapel Street. Please try to be prompt as the street doors are locked once the meeting starts and access for late-comers (via the fire-escape round the side) is awkward.

Summer Visits

A guided tour of Musgrave Church Field

Tuesday 12th May at 7.00pm

An evening tour of Church Field and its associated features in the company of Dr Mike Lea. Park by the Tithe Barn near St Theobald's Church in Great Musgrave at NY 768 132

A day trip to Roman Binchester

Saturday 20th June

A guided tour of the spectacular remains being revealed by the latest season of excavation at Binchester Roman Fort. Our tour guide will be Mr David Mason (see Roman Navy talk, above).

The tour is likely to cost around £4. Travel arrangements will be advised in due course.

Organiser : Phyl Rouston : contact 017683 53463 for details and to confirm attendance

